METROPOLITAN
regions

METROPOLITAN regions

This annual report tracks various indicators for the following Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC. This report uses the Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB identifies 17 Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas, 245 Metropolitan Areas, and 58 Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas located outside New England, as well as 12 New England County Metropolitan Areas. Unless otherwise indicated, this section compares Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas.

Socio-Economic Indicators

Income and Poverty

The nation's median household income rose, in real terms, by 2.7 percent, from $39,744 in 1998 to $40,816 in 1999, the highest level ever recorded by the Census Bureau. The 1999 median income was the highest ever recorded for non-Hispanic White ($44,366), African American ($27,910), and Hispanic ($30,735) households. The real median income of Asian and Pacific Islander households ($51,205) was the highest median income of any group, but not statistically different from the previously recorded high.

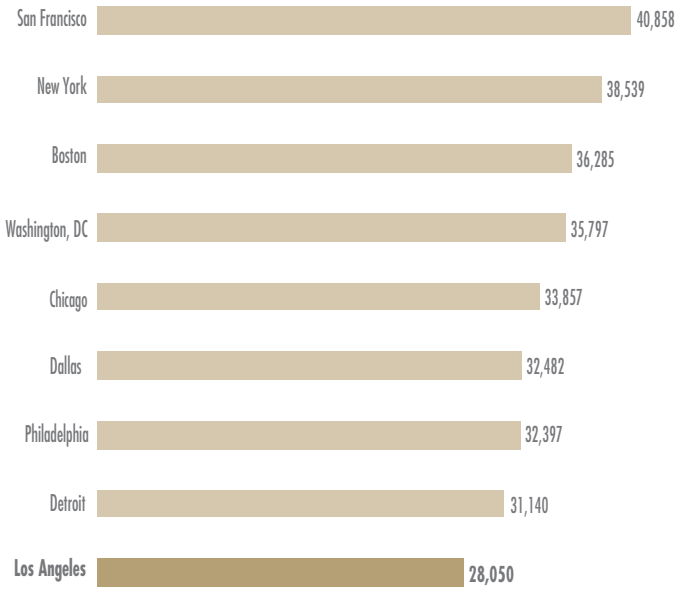
The nation's poverty rate dropped from 12.7 percent in 1998 to 11.8 percent in 1999, the lowest rate since 1979. Every racial and ethnic group experienced a drop in both the number of poor and the percent in poverty, as did children and the elderly. The percentage of people 65 and over who were living in poverty reached a low of 9.7 percent in 1999, and the proportion of children living in poverty was 16.3 percent, which is the lowest rate since 1979.

The 1999 poverty rates for the nation's major racial and ethnic groups set or equaled historic lows. The rate for African Americans (23.6 percent) was the lowest ever measured by the Census Bureau, the rate for Hispanics (22.8 percent) equaled the low reached in 1979, and the rate for Asian and Pacific Islanders (10.7 percent) also equaled its lowest measured value. The two-year average (1998-1999) poverty rate for California was 14.6 percent, compared to 12.3 percent for the nation. California was one of seven states which experienced a significant decrease in the poverty rate based on comparing two-year averages, 1998-99 and 1997-98.

Figure 35

Per Capita Personal Income by Metropolitan Area, 1999

(Dollars)



Source: US Department of Commerce

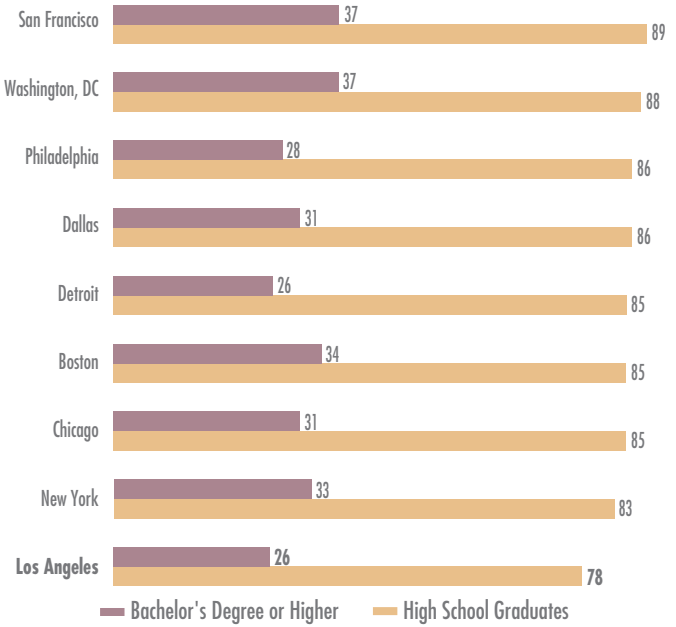
The Los Angeles metropolitan area has the lowest per capita income among the metropolitan areas tracked in this report. The 1998 per capita income for Los Angeles was $26,778 compared to $37,414 for San Francisco, which is the area with the highest per capita income in the nation.

According to the U.S. Census, the average earnings in 1999 for high school graduates ages 18 and over were $24,570 annually, compared to $45,680 for those with a Bachelor's degree. The Los Angeles metropolitan area has the lowest rate of population 25 years and older who have completed high school, and the lowest rate of residents with a Bachelor's degree or higher education. Only one fourth of the adult population in the Los Angeles area have a college degree.

Figure 36

Educational Attainment by Metropolitan Area, 1999

Percent of Total Population 25 Years and Over



Source: US Department of Education

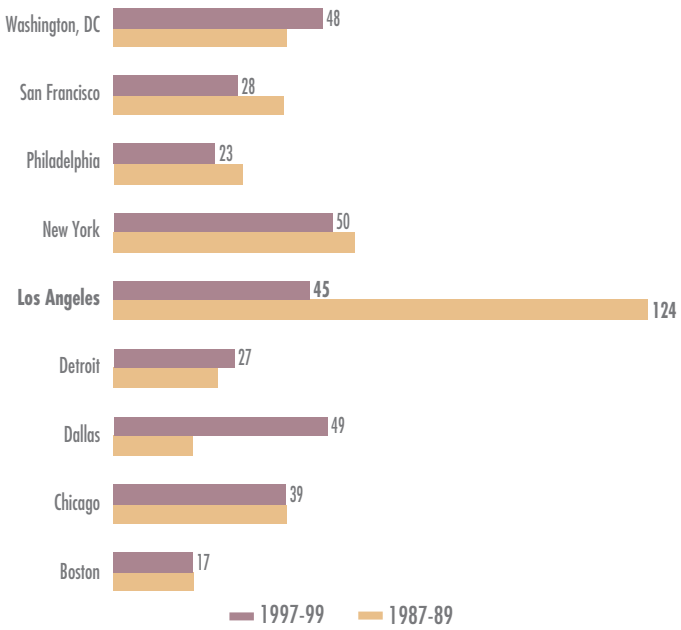
Housing

The Los Angeles Metropolitan area authorized 7,000 more permits for housing units per year during the three-year period 1997 to 1999 than during the previous three-year period, 1996 to 1998 (45,000 and 38,000 respectively).

Figure 37

New Housing Units Authorized by Permit by Metropolitan Area

Three-Year Averages (000)

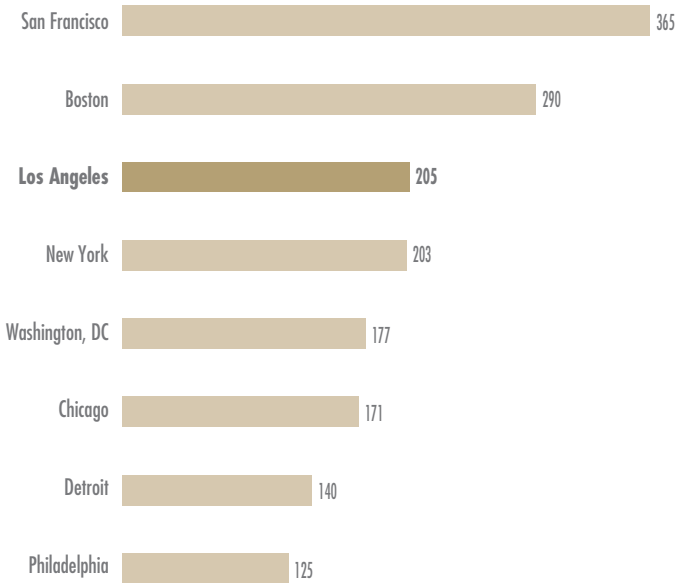


Source: US Bureau of the Census

Figure 38

Median Sales Price of Existing Single Family Homes By Metropolitan Area, 1999

(000)



Source: 2000 Statistical Abstract of the US

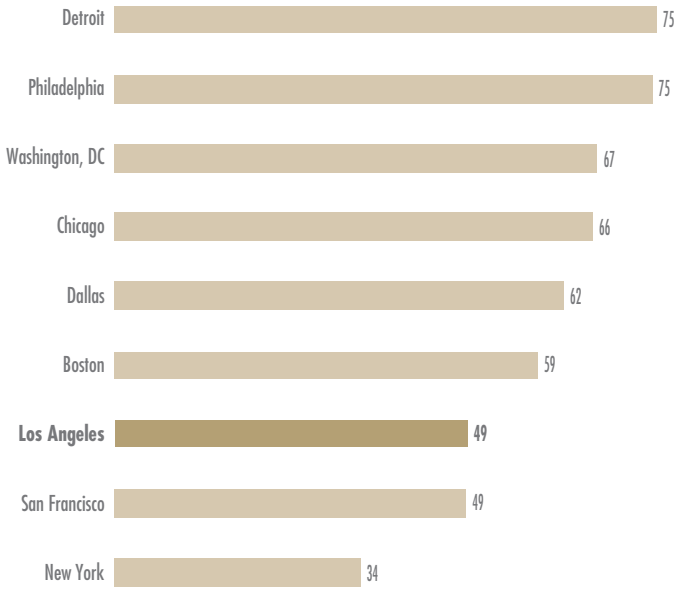
However, housing units authorized in this metropolitan area continue to be a fraction of the total units authorized in the 1980s. An average of 124,000 housing units was authorized annually in the Los Angeles metropolitan area during the equivalent period a decade ago (1987-1989).

Compared to other metropolitan areas across the country, the Bay Area and Southern California are ranked near the bottom in homeownership levels, as discussed below. In 1999, the San Francisco area posted the highest median sales price for an existing single-family home. The Los Angeles area was third, behind the Boston metro area.

Figure 39

Homeownership by Metropolitan Area, 2000

(Percent)



Source: US Bureau of the Census

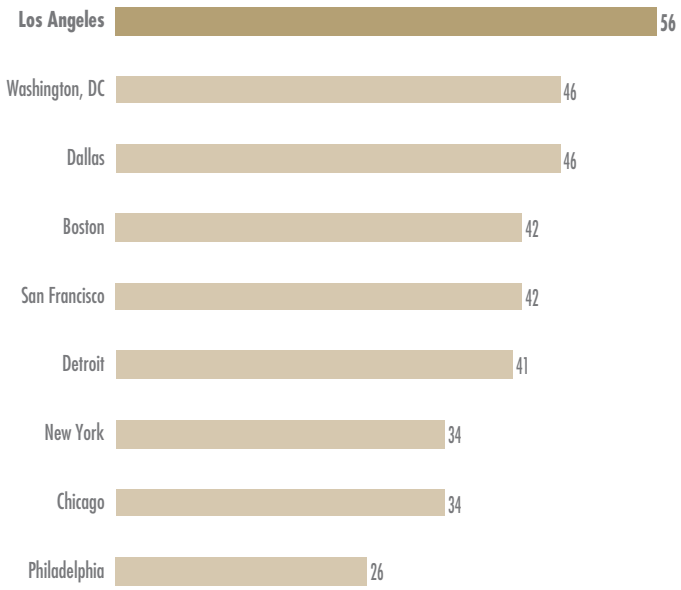
Census data indicates that in 2000 San Francisco moved to the spot previously occupied by Los Angeles as second-to-last among metropolitan areas in homeownership. The Los Angeles area had been second-to-last for several years, but the lack of affordable housing in the Bay Area is likely the main reason for San Francisco moving behind Los Angeles last year when comparing the percent of residents who own their home.

According to a recent study by the US Census, the homeownership rate in 1996 for native-born citizens and foreign-born citizens was about the same, approximately 67 percent, while the homeownership rate for non-citizens was only 33 percent. In the Midwest and West, foreign-born citizens were more likely than native-born citizens to own their home (77 percent and 67 percent respectively for foreign-born compared to 71 percent and 62 percent for native-born). Overall, foreign-born Hispanic citizens were more likely to own a home than native-born Hispanics (57 percent vs. 48 percent). As for non-citizens, (as well as others) homeownership was more attainable in the Midwest and South than in the Northeast and West, perhaps because of lower housing costs.

Transportation

Figure 40

Hours of Delay per Person by Metropolitan Area, 1999

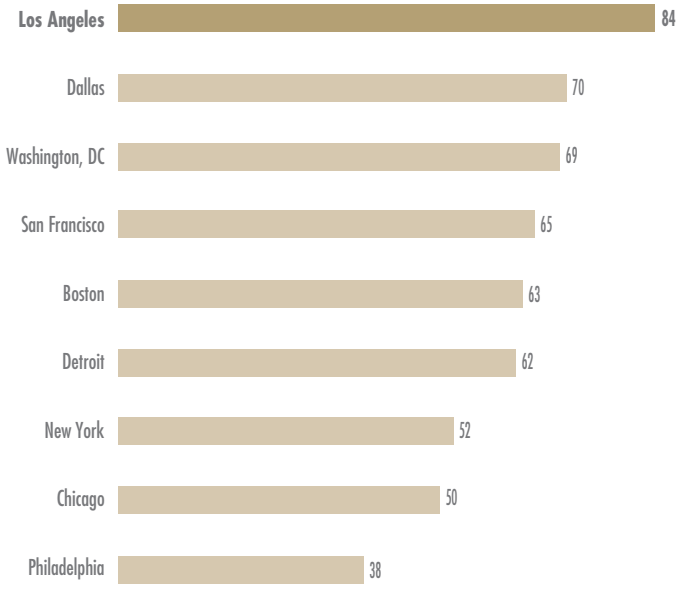


Source: Texas Transportation Institute

The 2001 Urban Mobility Report by the Texas Transportation Institute notes that the average American spends 36 hours per year stuck in traffic, up from 11 hours in 1982. The annual report looked at 68 cities across the country and rated the cities in several categories, with Los Angeles ranking worst in every major measure. (The report uses 1999 data, the most recent year for which good data are available.)

Figure 41

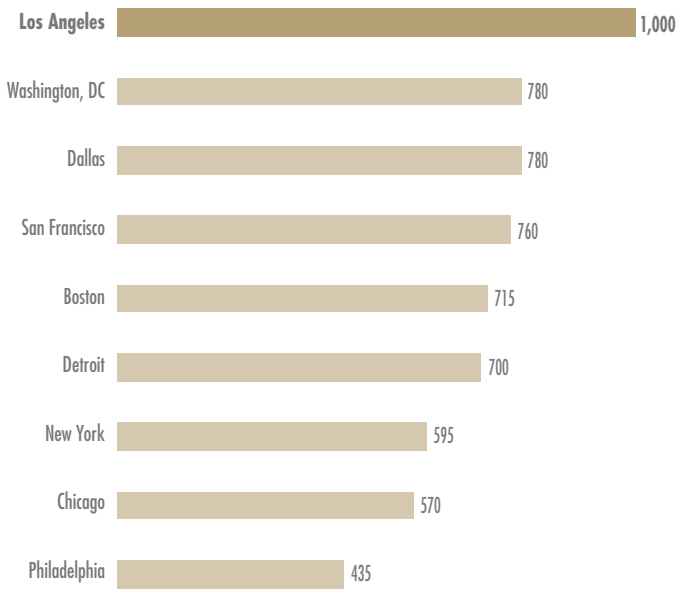
Excess Fuel Wasted per Person by Metropolitan Area, 1999
(Gallons)



Source: Texas Transportation Institute

Figure 42

Congestion Cost per Driver by Metropolitan Area, 1999
(Dollars)



Source: Texas Transportation Institute

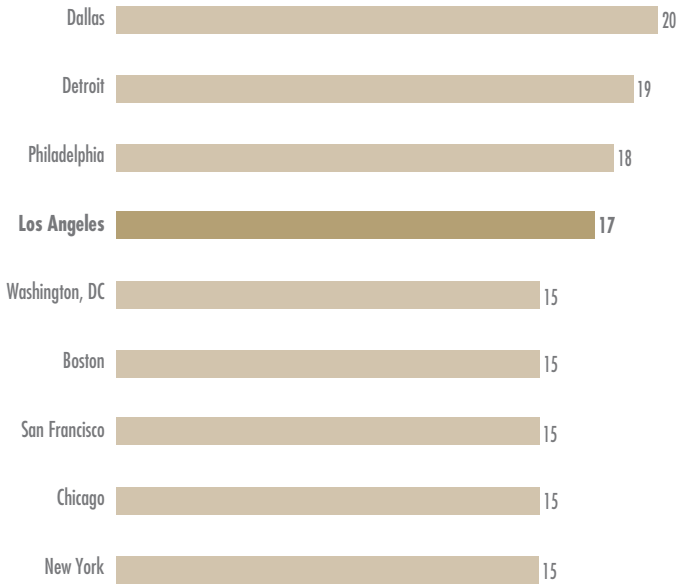
Los Angeles leads in (1) Travel Time Index, which measures how much longer a trip takes during rush hour vs. non-rush hour traffic, factoring in delays from accidents, volume, and other causes; (2) Travel Rate Index, which measures the difference between peak and off-peak travel but only takes volume delays into account and not accidents or other factors; and (3) Annual Delay per Person, which measures hours.

The study found that the average person in Los Angeles spends 56 hours per year stuck in traffic. Drivers in Los Angeles and Atlanta waste around 84 gallons per person per year, compared to an average of 55 gallons for the other 68 urban areas. Based on delay and fuel consumption, the annual congestion cost per person in Los Angeles is $1,000.

Total congestion cost for the 68 cities in 1999 amounts to $78 billion in lost productivity, 4.5 billion hours of delay, and 6.8 billion gallons of wasted fuel, according to this study. The annual Urban Mobility Report concludes that there have not been enough improvements to the transportation system nationwide to keep congestion from increasing, since the hours of delay, time of day, and miles of road that are congested have grown every year.

Figure 43

Household Spending on Transportation
By Metropolitan Area as Percent of Total Expenses, 1997-1998



Source: Surface Transportation Policy Project

A study on spending in major metropolitan areas released in 2000 by the Coalition for Smart Growth, Surface Transportation Policy Project and the Center for Neighborhood Technology found that sprawl drives up transportation costs. The research showed that personal transportation costs are highest in sprawling places, compared to places with more efficient land uses and more transportation choices. The study notes that the average American household devotes 18 cents out of every dollar it spends to transportation, with households in some metropolitan areas spending more on transportation than on shelter. And the poorest families spend the most—sometimes more than one-third of their income goes toward transportation needs. A total of 98 percent of the amount spent on transportation is for the purchase, operation, and maintenance of automobiles. Compared to households in metropolitan areas with the fewest sprawl characteristics, the average family living in a highly sprawling area spends about $1,300 more per year in transportation.

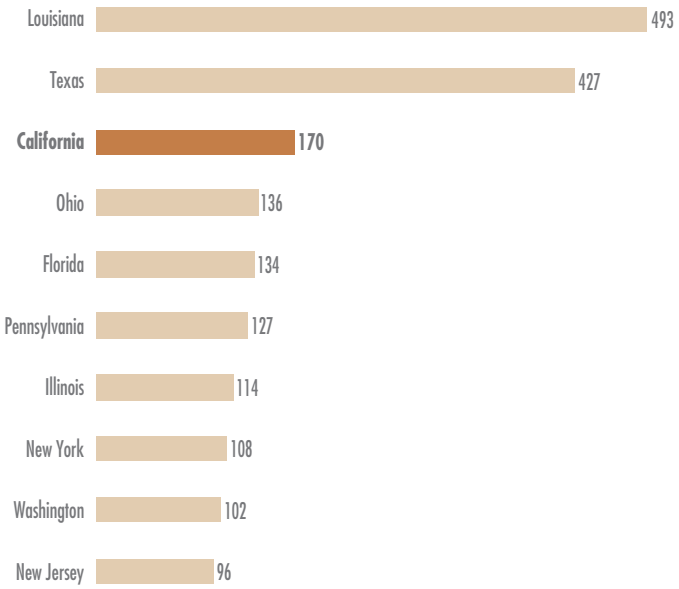
According to this study, households may spend over twice as much owning and operating a vehicle in one area as households in another area within the same metropolitan region. In the Los Angeles region, higher cost areas tend to be in outlying neighborhoods of sprawling development. Lower cost areas tend to be near active transit lines, where neighborhoods are walkable and destinations are close by. Some of the neighborhoods with the highest incomes also have the lowest transportation spending.

The Los Angeles area ranks 15th among 28 metropolitan areas studied in terms of the portion of household expenditures devoted to transportation. The Los Angeles metro area spends an average of $7,224 per household on transportation, equal to 17.4 percent of all household expenses.

Waterborne Commerce

Figure 44

Waterborne Commerce by State, 1999
(Million Tons)



Source: US Department of the Army, Corp of Engineers

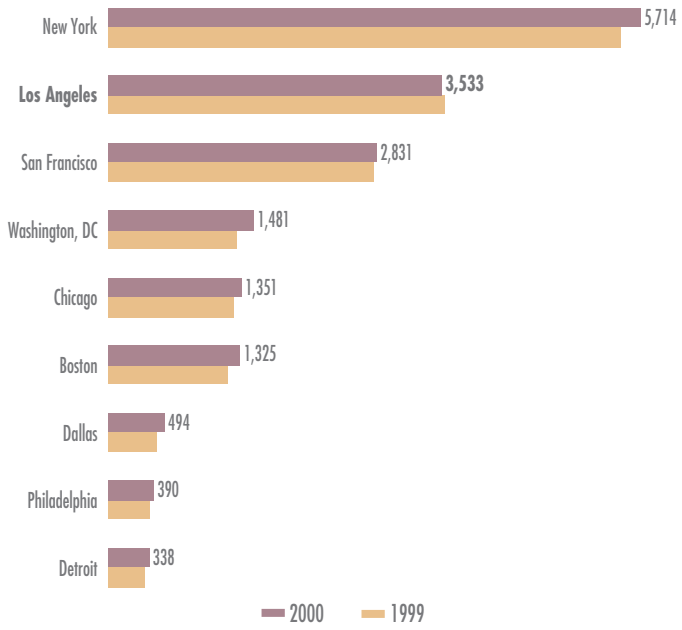
California remains third in the nation in tonnage of waterborne commerce handled. The state's waterborne commerce totaled 171.8 million tons of cargo in 1999, 70 percent foreign, 23 percent domestic, and 7 percent intrastate. The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles posted a combined 103 million tons of cargo, 76 percent foreign and 24 percent domestic. The two regional ports reported a combined total of 79 tons of foreign commerce, 26 million tons of exports (33 percent) and 53 million tons of imports (67 percent). The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles are the nation's top ranking ports by dollar value for foreign commerce.

Travel and Tourism

Almost 51 million international travelers visited the US in 2000. More than half of these visitors were overseas

Figure 45

Visits by Overseas Travelers by City
(000)



Source: US Department of Commerce

travelers, from countries other than Mexico and Canada. In 2000, 50.9 million international visitors contributed $106 billion in revenues to the US economy, according to the Tourism Industries in the US Department of Commerce. Japan remained the largest overseas market to the US, with over five million visitors to the US. This market has also consistently contributed the most in travel receipts for the nation. Since the recovery from Asia's economic downturn in the last two years, visits from residents of the Pacific Asia region to the US have increased consistently. Since 1995, the number of visitors to the US from this region grew by 15 percent.

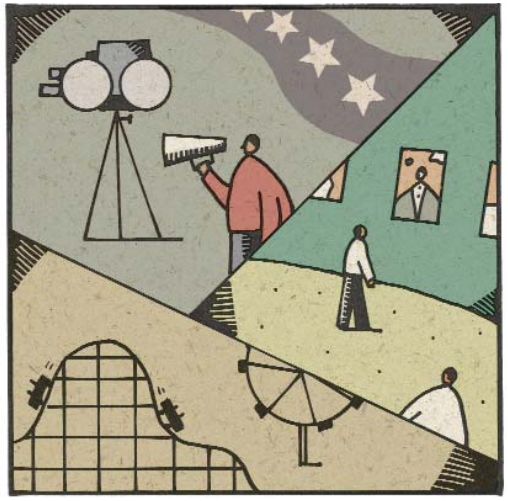
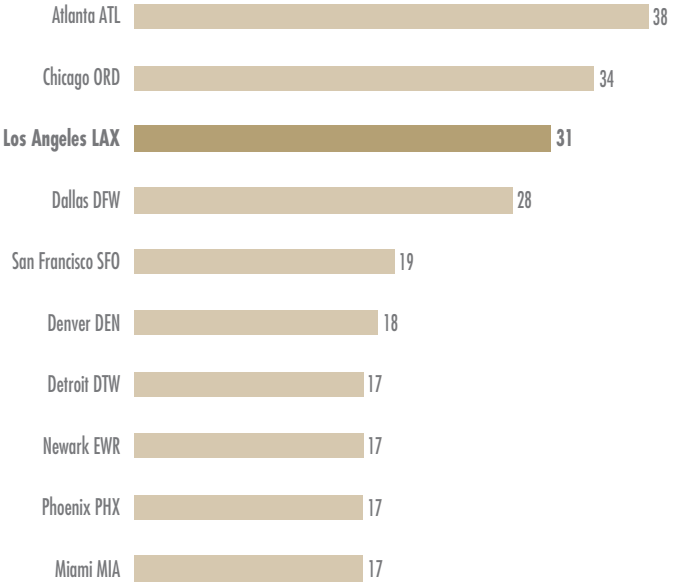


Figure 46

Top Ten Airports by Passengers by City, 1999
(Millions)



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) is the third busiest airport in the world in terms of passengers and cargo. Atlanta and Chicago rank first and second in passenger traffic. LAX is third in the world in cargo handling, behind Memphis International Airport (headquarters of Federal Express), and Hong Kong International.

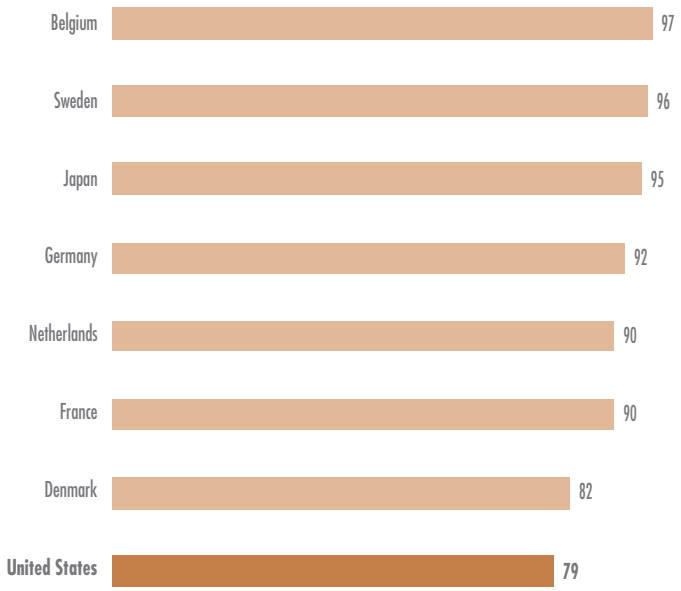
WORLD regions

While most quality jobs increasingly require not only a high school education but some post-secondary education as well, only 79 percent of 17-year-olds in the US are enrolled in school, compared to over 90 percent in other industrialized nations of the world. The US ranks highest among those countries in the amount spent on public education per student in secondary schools and third highest in the amount spent in primary schools. When comparing the number of students per teacher at the junior high level, the US ranks seventh among other industrialized nations.

Figure 47

Population Enrolled in Secondary Schools, 1996

Percent of 17 Year Olds

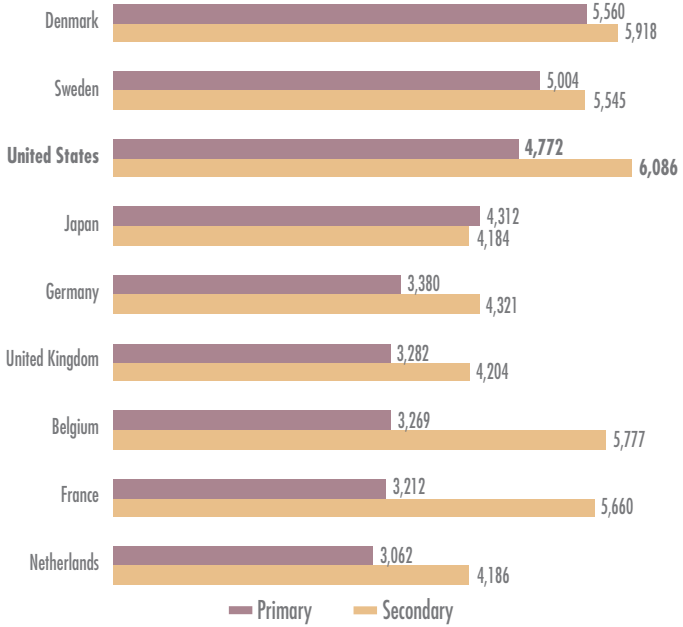


Source: US Department of Education

Figure 48

Public Education Expenditures per Student, 1996

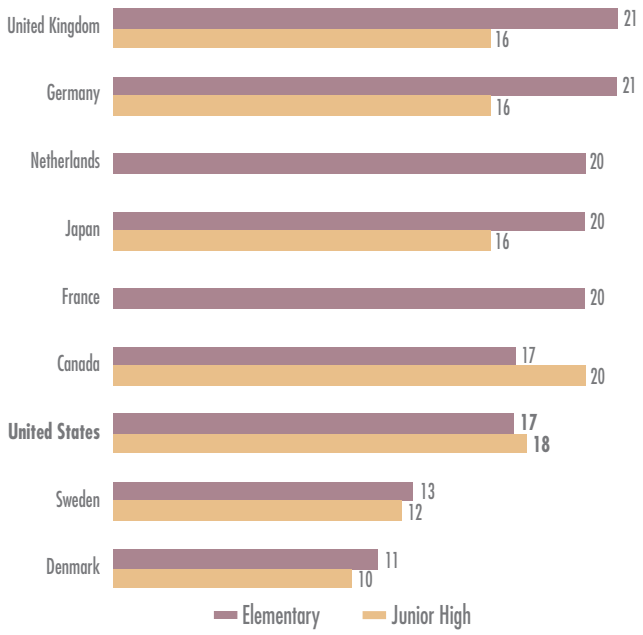
(1995 U.S. Dollars)



Source: US Department of Education

Figure 49

Pupils per Teacher in Public and Private Schools, 1996



Source: US Department of Education

A study released in December 2000 comparing the performance of American eighth graders in math and science to eighth graders in other nations indicated that American students trail behind various Asian and European countries. Thirty-eight nations participated in the international math and science study. The average score of eighth graders in math was 502 for the US, compared to 604 for Singapore, which had the highest math average. In science, the US average was 515, compared to 569 for Taiwan, which had the highest science average. Among the 38 nations, the US ranked 19th in math and 18th in science. The report also noted that Americans are less likely than students in other countries to be taught math and science by teachers with Bachelor's or Master's degrees in those fields.